

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 5 Aug 82
TO: Registry - Vera		
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REMARKS: Please log the attached and send <u>FYI</u> copy to C/PAD/OEXA. [] has the original and will take the action. [] has a zerox copy. If you have any questions, please call me. Thanks Judy		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
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The New York Times

WASHINGTON BUREAU
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
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CE XA 82-1956

August 3, 1982

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[Redacted]
External Affairs
The Central Intelligence Agency
Washington DC 20505

Dear Bill:

The New York Times Magazine has asked me to do a story on the C.I.A. It has been awhile since the Times Magazine, or any major magazine, for that matter, has taken a comprehensive look at the agency. The last piece published by the Times Magazine appeared in July 1979. Written by Tad Szulc, it was a look at the agency in the wake of the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and Admiral Turner's shakeup of the operations directorate. In September 1976, Taylor Branch wrote a piece about covert operations and the Church Committee investigation. Not surprisingly, both articles concentrated on upheaval and problems.

It's time for a dispassionate, in-depth look at the agency. The Reagan Administration has clearly set out to rebuild American intelligence capabilities and Bill Casey has put a premium on improving the quality of intelligence analysis. There's been much talk in the press about improving and expanding operations and an increased use of covert actions. However, no one has stopped to pull all this together in a single story that, in effect, gives the public a status report on the C.I.A.

If you strip away the frills, I guess it boils down to a basic question: how good is the C.I.A.? That means beginning with the ultimate product, the intelligence analyses and reports. How accurate are they? How timely? How useful to decision-makers? Since the reports reflect the quality of intelligence collection, I would like to examine the steps that have been taken to make improvements in that area. Given the public fears about covert operations, I should try to report what the agency is, and is not, doing.

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August 3, 1982

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Obviously, I can write a story based on interviews with intelligence consumers, members of congressional oversight committees and intelligence officials from other agencies, but to do justice to what's happening at the C.I.A., I really should spend time with agency officials. I realize I'm asking for unusual access, but I think it's in both our interests. Because the hysteria about intelligence abuses has passed, this is a good time for an even-handed assessment of the C.I.A. The best way for me to understand what the agency is doing, and the best way for the agency to dispel a lot of public rumors and suspicions, is to let me talk with agency officials.

Let me give you some examples. For an overview of the C.I.A. I should talk to Mr. Casey and John McMahon. If I am to understand and report on improvements in intelligence analysis, I need to talk to Bob Gates and some of his analysts. I need to find out what problems this Administration inherited in analysis and how you've gone about correcting them. I need to know what changes have been made in the content and timing of intelligence reports. In this area, I would also like to meet with [redacted] and some of the national intelligence officers.

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In operations, I clearly must address the issue of what rebuilding means. What improvements have been made in the collection of foreign intelligence? One interesting issue is training--how does the C.I.A. go about finding and training people for foreign assignments? Without compromising your operations, I'd like to write a little about the teaching of tradecraft. What sorts of covert operations are considered acceptable these days? For all these questions, I'd like to have some time with John Stein and his people.

Similarly, I'd like to interview E.R. Hineman about his science and technology shop and Harry Fitzwater about support and logistics. On the issue of internal checks, I'd like to interview [redacted] and the new inspector general, if one has been named. Because there is a great deal of interest in, and misunderstanding about, counterintelligence, I would like to talk with [redacted]

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I am open to discussion about ground rules for some of these interviews. I would like to do as many as possible on the record, but in some of the more sensitive areas, you may prefer background sessions. My deadline for reporting is mid-September, so, if the agency is willing to help, I'd like to get started with interviews as soon as possible.

Sincerely

[Redacted]

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External Affairs
Room 7D43
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Langley, Va.

By Messenger

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